



*State of California*

## **OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Parole administrators shifted high-risk sex offenders among motels  
when they could not find housing at least a half-mile from a school, and then lied about it**

Top administrators in the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's parole division ordered parolees who were high-risk sex offenders to be repeatedly moved from motel to motel when parole agents in Los Angeles County found they could not comply with a new law prohibiting such parolees from living within a half-mile of a school, the Office of the Inspector General said today.

Assembly Bill 113, which took effect January 1, 2006, prohibits parolees designated as high-risk sex offenders from living within a half-mile of any public or private K-12 school. Another statute — "Megan's Law"— requires anyone convicted of specified sex crimes to register with local law enforcement every year within five days of his or her birthday and to update the information within five days of moving or becoming homeless. A sex offender who becomes homeless is considered "transient" and is required to register only every 30 days.

The Inspector General found that as the January 1, 2006 effective date of the new law approached — and even as early as October 2005—parole agents in Los Angeles County repeatedly told supervisors they could not locate housing that complied with the new half-mile limit. When parole supervisors reported the problem up their chain of command, a mid-level parole administrator issued an order on December 30, 2005 to supervisors in Parole Region III, which covers Los Angeles County, to have agents begin moving the parolees from motel to motel every four days. The investigation determined that his direct supervisor, a senior parole administrator, approved the order.

The Inspector General also reported that when questioned about the matter, the two administrators lied both to the Office of the Inspector General's investigators and to state legislators, saying they did not know the parolees were being repeatedly moved and did not know who had given the order to move them and suggested instead that the parole staff may have been confused about the new law. Both administrators also said they did not know the region was out of compliance with Assembly Bill 113 until early February 2006.

Confronted with evidence in the form of an e-mail and telephone records that he had issued the order to move the parolees every four days, the mid-level administrator later admitted he had ordered the action and confirmed that the senior administrator, his direct supervisor, had approved it. The senior administrator has continued to deny knowledge of or involvement in the matter.

In a public report summarizing the results of a months-long confidential investigation, the Inspector General said investigators could not determine the administrators' motives in ordering the moves, but that it appeared they were either attempting to deliberately conceal the presence of the high-risk sex offenders inside the half-mile limit to "buy time" until appropriate housing could be located or misinterpreted other laws governing the registration of high-risk sex offenders.

"The idea may have been that if the parolees moved every four days they would be considered homeless or transient and therefore would be required to register only every 30 days," said Inspector General Matthew L. Cate. "They also may have believed that as transients, the parolees would have no residence and therefore, technically, could not be said to be 'residing' within a half-mile of a school, even if the motel in which they were living was inside the half-mile limit," Cate said.

"Whatever the thinking behind it, this action by a senior and mid-level parole administrator flies in the face of the clear purpose of Assembly Bill 113, which is to prohibit high-risk sex offenders from residing within a half-mile of a school at any time during parole," the Inspector General said.

The Inspector General reported that even if the two administrators intended moving the parolees to be only a temporary solution to the housing problem, they took no other measures to find a remedy. They also failed to notify the Secretary of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and other state officials that parolees in Los Angeles County were out of compliance with Assembly Bill 113. A February 17, 2006 audit of Parole Region III by the Department of Corrections and

Rehabilitation found seven high-risk sex offenders on parole caseloads still living within a half-mile of a school.

Because of confidentiality laws governing personnel matters, the Inspector General's public report of the investigation does not name the two parole administrators involved. A detailed confidential report of the investigation was submitted to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and other administration officials on November 14 for appropriate action.

In contrast to the actions of the two administrators, parole agents in Los Angeles County tried diligently to find housing for high-risk sex offenders that would comply with the new law, the Inspector General found. When the order came to start moving the parolees every four days, agents followed the directive, but also took steps to notify local law enforcement of the parolees' presence in the area.

One parole agent alerted then-Secretary of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Roderick Q. Hickman of the situation on February 3, 2006, and unknown parties also notified the media that high-risk sex offenders were being "shuffled" from motel to motel in the communities of Norwalk, South Gate, and Pico Rivera. That report resulted in the airing of a television news story on February 9, 2006.

Parole Region III is one of four parole regions in the state. According to Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation figures, as of February 17, 2006, approximately 500 high-risk sex offenders were assigned to parole Region III caseloads. The Inspector General's investigation did not examine implementation of Assembly Bill 113 in other parole regions.

Supervision of state parolees is the responsibility of the Division of Adult Parole Operations of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. California law requires inmates being paroled from state prisons to be returned to the county of last legal residence unless it would be in the best interest of the public for the parolee to be sent to another county.

Although it is the parolee's responsibility to establish a place of residence after release from prison, the department helps parolees find temporary housing until they can locate a more permanent place

to live. The assistance is meant to give parolees stability and help them avoid homelessness, thereby enabling parole agents to more closely monitor their activities.

The full text of the Inspector General's summary report of the investigation can be viewed and downloaded from the Office of the Inspector General's web site at <http://www.oig.ca.gov/>. To view the report, click on the report title, "Summary Report: Investigation into the Improper Placement of Parolees Designated as High-Risk Sex offenders Within a Half-Mile of a School" (November 2006), on the home page or under Bureau of Audits and Investigations on the link entitled "Audits, Special Reviews, and Investigations" under "High-Risk Sex Offenders, Improper Placement of Parolees Designated as Within a Half-Mile of a School, Summary Report of Investigation" (November 2006).

The Office of the Inspector General is an independent state agency responsible for oversight of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The office carries out its mission by conducting audits and investigations of the department to uncover criminal conduct, administrative wrongdoing, poor management practices, waste, fraud, and other abuses by staff, supervisors, and management. The investigation was conducted under the authority provided to the Inspector General by California Penal Code section 6126.

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